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ABSTRACT

An exploratory study examined the relationship between adolescents' stance ("monologic" versus "dialogic") and several issues, including the degree to which adolescents explore tensions and contradictions in their writing and the nature of such tensions as related to gender and/or school attitudes. For the purposes of the study, "monologic" was defined as a rhetorical perspective or stance represented by an acceptance of a single version of reality while a "dialogic" perspective entails entertaining multiple, competing versions of reality. Subjects, 15 tenth-grade students in a suburban high school outside a large midwestern city, were selected based on their perceived differences in attitudes towards gender and school. Subjects completed questionnaires, read two short stories chosen for their portrayal of attitudes toward school and gender, and completed a variety of writing activities (including a short story) based on the stories. Interview transcripts, writings, and survey data for five of the subjects were subjectively analyzed and discussed by three judges to determine consistent patterns of their adopted stance and the types of tensions/contradictions. Results indicated that the two students who adopted a monologic orientation were relatively good students but were stuck in relatively static, absolutist versions of reality, and that two of the three students who adopted a dialogic perspective were not outstanding students yet were more likely to adopt multiple perspectives both in their story writing and responses. Findings suggest teachers need to employ activities that foster a more dialogic stance. (Two figures of data are included; 23 references are attached.) (RS)

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Tenth Graders' Exploration of Tensions and Contradictions in Story Writing and Literary Responses

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In using their writing to reflect about their lives, students may move from an absolutist, dualist stance to recognize and entertain tensions and contradictions in their lives and in texts. For example, Kroll (1990) found that journal writing about disparate accounts of the same Vietnam War battle served to move college freshmen from a "dualist" to a more "multiplist" stance. However, just as moral reasoning research has shifted from identifying stages of reasoning to an analysis of "moral sensitivity"—why persons are sensitive to moral dilemmas, so this and other developmental/reflective judgment research needs to consider reasons for students' willingness to explore tensions and contradictions.

Explore tensions and contradictions requires the ability to move from Bahktin described as a "monologic" perspective to a "dialogic" perspective (Klancher, 1989). For the purpose of this paper, the "monologic" is defined as a rhetorical perspective or stance represented by an acceptance of a single, often conventional version of reality. In contrast, adopting a "dialogic" perspective entails entertaining multiple, competing versions of reality. Bahktin (19) found the "dialogic" perspective reflected in the competing styles and "heteroglossia" or "verbal-ideological points of view" in the novel, a diversity that a "monologic" stance seeks to suppress. As Klancher notes:

> Bakhtin's crucial starting point—the diversity of practical languages rather then a unitary abstract structure—leads him to argue that every effort to impose unity on these languages is "monologic." The institutions of the school, the state, and the church enforce "monologic" languages as the voice of culture, the voice of authority, the voice of God ventriloquized through the literary critic, the politician, or the priest. His terms "dialogic" and "monologic" thus describe the uses of language rather than inherent properties of language itself (p. 84).

The differences between the "monologic" and "dialogic" therefore related to speakers' and writers' ability to perceive the ideological uses of languages. Adopting an "dialogic" stance is evident in parody, in which the "monologic" assumptions inherent in language use are ridiculed.

A "monologic" stance in a traditional adverserial rhetoric in which the speaker or writer attempts to "win over" an audience to adopt a particular position. Feminist critics perceive this adverserial relationship as often suppressing conflicts or tensions as opposed to a rhetoric that based on negotiation and mediation that openly acknowledges and defines conflicts. Rather than lining up according to competing *positions*, Lamb (1991) recommends focusing on differing <u>interests</u> or *issues* represented in the different perspectives, leading to a considering of reasons for these differing perspectives.

The "dialogic" is also associated with what Belencky et al (1986) as "connected knowing" that stresses the learners' personal or social relationship with others—the teachers or the authors' whose materials they are reading. Similarly, for Gilligan (1982), women's moral reasoning is typically context-bound, entering often competing, multiple consequences of their actions. In contrast, males focus on their own individual achievement and autonomy. This "autonomous" stance could be characterized as "monologic" because it celebrates a rigid sense of "doing the right thing" that is intolerant of ambiguity.

<u>Stance and the construction of text worlds</u>. These two stances may influence the ways in which adolescents construct text worlds as representations of reality. In adopting a "monologic" stance, an

adolescent may construct the experience of the "shopping mall" as a real-world representation of a fantasy-consumer dream world. In contrast, an adolescent constructing the same from a "dialogic" stance may recognize the tensions between creating consumer needs through idealized desires and the realities of financial debt incurred in paying for these products.

In constructing these worlds, adolescents' stances are shaped by the practices of defining peer-group, gender, and ethnic identity in specific contexts. As Bruner (1990) argues, "selves" are situated in different social contexts. Adolescents who hang out in shopping malls define the meaning of their acts in by resisting of the expectations of buying products and by their flaunting of social rules. As John Fiske (1989) notes, "the positive pleasure of parading up and down, of offending 'real' consumers and the agents of law and order, of asserting their different within, and different use of, the cathedral of consumerism becomes an oppositional cultural practice" (17).

As illustrated below in Figure 1, adolescents construct real or text worlds by defining the conventions or norms constituting a world. And, as a part of constructing worlds, students assign certain associations with images or behaviors involved in a cultural practice. For example, they associate certain forms of dress with being a "jock" or "burnout."

Figure 1

Analyzing the Cultural Practices in Real and Text Worlds

Real Worlds	Text Worlds
Defining social/cultural identity	Processes of constructing worlds
- peer group - gender	- defining conventions/norms - assigning associations - noting conflicts, tensions, dissonance

In the process of constructing these worlds, adolescents begin to sense the tensions and contradictions inherent in defining their social identities. They confront the tension between, on the one hand, achieving popularity by conforming to peer group norms and, on the other hand, defining their own sense of identity. Adolescents who adopt a "dialogic" stance may be more willing to explore these tensions or contradictions in their writing than adolescents who adopt a "monologic" stance.

Adolescents also are engaged in the practice of defining their gender identity or the practice of "doing gender." (Moss, 1989). Typically, males are socialized to define their identity through physical actions or competitive performance with others. In contrast, females are socialized to be considerate of the consequences of their actions on their interpersonal relationships (Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer, 1990). In their research with adolescent females in a private school, Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer, 1990) noted that some females exhibited moral reasoning characterized as an "ethics of caring," while others employed an "ethics of justice." An "ethics of caring" focused on consideration of others and the consequences of one's actions. Analysis of the adolescents' thinking in interview transcripts indicated that this interpersonal orientation often resulted in an awareness of the conflicting demands and ambiguities associated with interpersonal awareness. In contrast, an "ethics of justice" focused on "doing the right thing" according to institutional norms or principles of justice. Adolescents adopting this more autonomous orientation were less likely to entertain complexities in their interviews.

These gender orientations may also influence students' writing. When British adolescents were asked to write narratives (Moss, 1989), males typically wrote action-adventure stories in which they

dramatically defeated their opponents in feats of physical prowess. In contrast, the females wrote stories focusing on their development of interpersonal relationships. Rather than perceive these stories as simply playing out traditional sex-role stereotypes, Moss argues that these stories represent adolescents' desire to define and explore the complications of defining gender roles. She found that many of the stories contained some of the underlying tensions and ambiguities associated with defining these roles. For example, the female romance stories frequently grappled with the issue of male power. As Moss notes:

> The writer's attention is focused by the genre—not on sexuality as an ahistorical possibility outside culture, but, on the contrary, on boys' reading of that sexuality and on the space for female sexual desire in a world named by men. The male view of women, the female view of men, are seen as being in conflict. The women's view of the man includes the knowledge that the man's view of her is wrong, and that if she succumbs without a struggle to his initial view of her, fails powerfully to contest it, she will be the loser. [They are] depicting the tensions between alternative ways of reading masculinity (the thriller) or masculinity and femininity (the romance).
>
> I am arguing that in deploying the rules of writing, children struggle over the appropriation of discursive practices. These discursive practices would position them but do not offer a unitary self, one single position from which events can be securely inter- preted. Rather, they are full of contradictions and conflicts. (pp.114- 115).

Defining gender identity therefore involves coping with the contradictions between competing traits of maleness and femaleness. Rather than presuppose a reader with a well-defined identity and attitudes, it may be more useful to think of a reader "as a divided subject whose identity and even gender are constructed through her participation in such signifying practices of culture as texts" (Ebert, 1989). In contrast, a patriarchal stance entails a "monologic" perspective by imposing the "authority of consensus" (Langberg, 1990, p. 11). Langbery is therefore critical of Fish's "interpretative community" as resulting in "a consensual community world [that] would tend to recognize only the perspective in a text that conforms to the group's own dominant perspective," preferring Bakhtin's vision of the community as thriving on multiple, conflicting perspectives that prevents communities from becoming overly insular.

There has been little research on differences in stance as related to gender differences in writing. Keroes (1990) compared male and female college students' proficiency test essays written in response to two different prompts—discussion of an unreasonable demand and a regrettable decision. Drawing on Gilligan, the essays were categorized as "autonomous" and "connected." Males were more likely to write "autonomous" essays for both topics, although the differences (Chi-square < .05) were not significant.

However, rather than perceiving discourse differences as the *effects* of gender differences, it may be more useful, as did Moss (1989), to examine the ways in which adolescents explore the complexities of developing gender identity through their writing. It may be the case that tasks such as writing proficiency test essays used in the Keroes (1990) study serve to minimize exploration of tensions and contradictions, while more open-ended, informal writing and story writing may foster exploration of the problematic.

Attitude towards school. Adolescents also define their identity in terms of their allegiance the the institutional norms and roles associated with the school. Students whose self-concepts are more "reality-bound" define themselves in terms of being the "good student," "athlete," "politician," "cheerleader," etc. In contrast, students who are alienated from school—who are less "reality-bound," are more likely to display behaviors that deviate from these norms and roles. The degree to which students accept or question school norms may be related to their willingness to entertain alternative perspectives, tensions, and contradictions. High school students who scored high on a political

alienation scales responded more positively to fantasy literature than low-scoring students (Appleman, 1982). The more "reality-bound" students may have more difficulty entertaining and constructing the optional worlds of fantasy literature than alienated students who are seeking alternatives to the world of the school.

Students who more likely to conform to the "good student" role may be less likely to explore tensions and contradictions because school writing often consists of unified, thematic interpretations, requiring them to adopt the collective, normative stance encouraged by the textbook or teacher. For example, in responding to literature, students are encouraged to apply the conventions of "coherence" rather than divergent "contingencies" (Rabinowitz, 1987). The teacher encourages an interpretation consistent with his or her own extensive re-reading of a text to achieve a coherent whole that contrasts with the student's own initial, exploratory experience that might be rife with perceived unresolved tensions and contradictions (Rabinowitz, 1991). Adopting a "monologic" stance may be due less to a cognitive orientation and more to conformity to the dominant school culture. Hull and Rose (1990) argue that students from different cultural background respond in unconventional ways, deviating from those responses reflected socialization in literary analysis related to either middle class assumptions. This suggests that students' attitudes towards school and their perceptions of student expectations may be related to their willingness to explore tensions and contradictions.

Real-world experiences. Students' willingness to examine tensions and contradictions in their writing may also reflect their willingness to critically examine their real-world experiences. For example, students who are more likely to question authority figures may be more likely to explore complexities in their responses and story writing than those who are less likely to engage in such questioning.

Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this exploratory study is to explore the relationship between adolescents' stance ("monologic" versus dialogic) and:

- the degree to which they explore tensions and contradictions in their writing.
- the nature of the tensions or contradictions in their writing as related to gender and/or school attitudes.
- the degree to which the tensions or contradictions experienced in real world contexts are reflected in school writing.
- between-task differences in exploring tensions and contradictions between freewriting, storywriting, and responding to literature.
- differences in leisure time-reading, reading interests, class grade, and a teacher's perception of their attitude towards school.

Subjects. The original population from which the subjects in this study were selected consisted of 155 tenth grade students attending a suburban high school outside of a large midwestern city. The students were members of three "regular" and two "honors" tenth-grade English classes taught by the same teacher.

The teacher and a former teacher familiar with many of the students identified 15 students who represented what they perceived to be differences in attitudes towards gender and school. These 15 students served as the subjects for an in-depth analysis of their written responses and story writing.

Materials. To determined students' leisure time literacy habits, a questionnaire employed by Svensson (1985) designed to determine amount of reading, viewing, and listening activities was selected. To

determine students' reading interests, the Purves (1981) "literary interest/transfer" scale was employed.

Two short stories from the Gallo collection of stories, *Connections*, were selected on the basis of their portrayal of attitudes towards school and gender.

The story, "I Go Along" by Richard Peck (1990), examines the differences between "regular" and "honors" students in terms of their attitudes towards school. Gene, a shy student in a "regular" class, decides to attend a poetry reading with the "honors class" at a nearby college. On the bus ride to the college, Gene is befriended by Sharon, who encourages him to work harder in order to succeed in school.

The story, "Fairy Tale," by Todd Strasser (1990) , is a contemporary version of the Cinderella story. An adolescent girl, Cynthia, who was assumed to be unattractive and unpopular by her mother and step-sister, attends a dance in disguise and attracts a lot of attention. Cynthia rejects the advances of a wealthy boy, "The One," in favor of the more unconventional friend, Sam.

Procedures. The 155 students in the study initially responded to a series of writing activities about a variety of topics. Over a period of a month, students wrote about their perceptions of various groups/cliques in the school and their relationship to these groups. Students also completed a series of ten minute freewriting activities on the topics of "how others perceive me," "what I believe in," "reading," and "movies." Students also wrote a short story over a period a two weeks in which they composed a several drafts and a final typed version.

The students then wrote open-ended responses to the story, "I Go Along." After a three week interval, students wrote responses to "Fairy Tale."

The students' teacher rated each student in terms of their attitude towards school on a scale of "1" (low) to "6" (high).

The 15 students selected for further study were then separately interviewed in one hour interviews according to an interview schedule. Students were asked a series of questions regarding their perceptions of family members, their leisure-time activities, what they value in life, their attitudes towards school and gender, their moral reasoning, and their perceptions of their stories.

The students teacher and a former teacher were asked to describe their impressions of each of these fifteen students.

Analysis. Three judges, including the investigator, rated the story and the story responses according to the degree to which the students explored tensions and contradictions: ("little/none" vs. "some" vs. "extensive"). Interjudge reliability was .85 across all writing types.

Of the fifteen students selected for individual analysis, analysis has been completed on the following five students (identified by pseudonyms) representing a range of relatively contrasting gender and school attitudes:

School attitude	Gender attitude
Kerry "positive"	"traditional"
Mike "negative"	"traditional"
Adell "positive"	"non-traditional"
Dee "negative"	"non-traditional"
John "positive"	"non-traditional"

The interview transcripts, writings, and survey data for five of the fifteen students were subjectively analyzed and discussed by the judges to determine consistent patterns in their adopted stance and the types of tensions/contradictions. This analysis drew on Moss's (1989) analysis of adolescents' stories and Bruner's (1990) "cultural psychological" analysis of key themes inherent in interviews with members of one family. The judges attempted to discern those themes around which the students' tensions/contradictions revolved. The judges then determined, within the five students, which could be considered as "monologic" and which, "dialogic".

RESULTS

This report contains brief summaries of each of the analysis of these five students, followed by an overview of the consistent patterns across the five students. Each summary will initially describe the student's general orientation, followed by an analysis of how this orientation is reflected in their story and their responses to stories.

Students With "Monologic" Orientations

Two of the five students represented a more "monologic" orientation in that they were less likely to examine tensions and contradictions in their writing or responses than the other three students.

Kerry. Kerry consistently reiterates the importance of with doing well in school and in "doing the right thing" according to perceived institutional norms. Kerry readily and optimistically accepts the institutional status quo. She received a B+ grade in her English class; her teacher rated her a relatively positive "5" on a scale from "1" to "6" in terms of her attitude towards school.

One possible reason for her "reality-bound" orientation is her strong interest in science and math. The daughter of a science teacher, she has a particular interest in astronomy and reads a number of astronomy magazines. She notes that she is wants to "learn how to solve problems." Rather than adopt a creative approach ("I am not creative"), her pragmatic orientation is geared towards achieving closure and order: "I'm a perfectionist. Everything has to be perfect when I get done."

Another possible reason for her institutional allegiance is her boundless optimism. In her writing, she consistently refers to the value of being "positive" and upbeat. She describes herself as "not moody. when my friends are not in a good mood, I don't really like being around them. It's more fun to be around people who are in a good mood." As she notes, "people have a positive perception of me." In her writings, she consistently associated the idea of "being positive" with avoiding tensions/contradictions.

Consistent with the teachers' perceptions that she has a relatively traditional gender attitude, she "worries about what the guys think of us." When asked to define herself, she notes that "I would have to ask a guy what they see in me." When asked to describe her future, she notes that "I will be at college going for my degree. Maybe I'll have a serious boyfriend that will ask me to marry him." While these comments such as relatively traditional gender attitude in terms of accepting a patriarchal "male-gaze" orientation, what is more telling is the degree to which she defers to others to define herself. That is, rather than distinguish between her or and other perspectives, she accepts others' perceptions of her as valid. Or, she imposes her own perceptions on others, again, without exploring the tensions between perspectives.

Her "reality-bound" optimism and her gender attitudes dovetail in her positive reaction to romance novels, which she reads a lot of: "I like romances because they all turn out happy and I think that's cool. They have all of these conflicts but they always seem to work them out. It kind of relates to my own life."

In response to questions about moral reasoning, she adopts a legalistic "ethics of justice," noting that the "wrong thing to do is [defined as] breaking the law." In contrast to an "ethics of caring," she defines the "right thing to do" as "make yourself happy," a more egocentric moral orientation.

Her story reflects her propensity to control her life according to what she perceives as positive institutional values. In the story, the main character is "a ghost that somehow got sent down to help this punk girl [Jenny] straighten out her life." The fact that Jenny's "ways are different than most people" represents a challenge for the narrator because "she doesn't believe in herself." When Jenny goes to a party, she intervenes as a super-ego ghost to tell her to "stop drinking, stop smoking, don't go to those weird parties, and change your group of friends." Rather than explore the complexities of the story's underlying good versus evil duality, she concludes the story by noting that the ghost's "actions are wonderful."

She search for order in her life is manifested her intertextual links which serve to reiterate and reify her orientation. Kerry notes that she derived the idea for her story from the movie *Heavenly Kid*—in the movie, "there is a sort of a Guardian Angel looking out for her." And, embedded in the story is a parable told to Jenny by her grandfather about two adolescent lovers building sand castles on the beach. In the story, the young male builds a large sand castle to impress the female. When the female comes down to the beach, she can't find him, so "she took her life. She thought that no matter what place she could be, it wasn't good enough unless he would be there right beside her." The language of this parable reflects a "monologic" orientation in that it accepts rather than questions implied patriarchal values. The reiteration of these gender attitudes, coupled with the use of the movie, suggests that she seeks out those narratives that reify her world view.

Her response to the story "I Go Along" reflects her pro-school, didactic stance: "it showed that Gene had gotten a great deal of maturity in him within one day of his life by just hanging around a good influence" as opposed to being "with people that weren't as smart." She also predicts that "Sharon would talk to the teacher about allowing Gene to move up to the advance class. Everything would be great." This prediction reifies, as in her story, the power of the "honors" student, Sharon, to be the institutional representative of "good." Thus, in her construction of reality in both her story and in her response, relatively one-dimensional characters serving as representatives of "good" impose their institutional attitudes onto others, without consideration of those others' perspectives.

In her response to "Fairy Tale," Kerry draws on her intertextual links ("It definitely resembled Cinderella") to generalize about the ending: "the ending was very typical. She doesn't want "The One." Instead, she goes for her Best Friend," an ending she approves of: "it's kind of neat that she did that." She sees little problematic in the story: "If I was one of the characters I would do exactly what they did." She also attributes Cynthia's actions to her attempts to "attracts guys [in order to make them] jealous," an attribution of motives that reflects her traditional gender attitudes.

Thus, given Kerry's gender orientation and her "reality-bound" allegiance to being a "good student," she demonstrates few instances of exploring tensions and contradictions.

Mike. Mike represents a relatively traditional patriarchal orientation manifested in his strong sense of independence characteristic of what Keroes (1990) defines as an "autonomous" as opposed to a "connected" stance. As he notes, "I go my own way. I do what I want to do." His independence often leads to his teachers perceiving him as an "occasional behavior problem;" he frequently tries to move his seat in the classroom. For example, he ends one of his writings with the statement, "I'm not writing any more because Ms. X won't let me move to a new seat." Despite this, he does relatively well in school. He received an A- grade from his teacher, who rated his attitudes towards school a "4."

His interview comments and writing reflect a relatively straightforward, pragmatic perspective. He frequently responded to questions with the answer, "I don't know." Although he has opinions, he rarely expresses or entertains optional perspectives. And, in some cases, he adopts an

absolutist, "dualist" stance, particularly in regard to gender differences. His describes learning in school as "doing what I have to...I sit in class and listen." He conceives of knowledge in practical terms, as "common sense." He prefers to accept rather than question the status quo: "I'm kind of laid back. Whatever happens, happens."

He attributes much of his independence to working at a resort during his summers in junior high school and living with his grandparents. He prefers active physical participation in his after-school jobs or in sports to academic work. As he notes, "I have to be doing something all of the time. I can't settle down in school." He noted with pride the fact that he received a "Wall of Fame" certificate from the school for his participation in a weight-lifting program.

He has not read any books for pleasure in the past two years. He prefers to read *Sports Illustrated*, the newspaper, or going to the movies. One possible reason for his lack of reading is that he plays on the school's football and baseball teams, and works twenty to twenty five hours a week at two different jobs. He also "doesn't like to write. If I have a couple of hours of spare time, I won't write. I'll listen to the radio." That fact that his writings were consistently brief may simply be due to lack of practice.

He adopts a relatively "autonomous," mode of moral reasoning, preferring "to be my own person. If others don't like me, who cares. I don't need them." And "I do what I want to do and screw the rest of them." When asked to give advice to incoming sophomores, he would tell them to "mind your business. If you don't like something, don't go saying that to someone, because her best friend may be somebody's else's best friend."

His gender attitudes could be characterized as patriarchal. He believes that "the guy in the family has to stand up and protect them; the guy should support his family and take care of them." He clearly distinguishes males and females in terms of physical abilities, noting that there are:

> not many females that will go out and do what a man would do. Females aren't interested in a lot of stuff males are interested in— a woman wouldn't want to go out in the woods and cut a couple of cords of wood and a male would not want to sit around and B.S. with a woman. I know I wouldn't.

One reason that he perceive physical activity as a more masculine trait and talk as a feminine trait may be his experience with this mother and older sister. He perceives his mother, someone for whom he has a lot of respect, as "treating my older sister different than me. She talks more in depth with he. They share secrets with each other."

In his story, "Deadly Truth," which he derived from the movies and from news stories, he portrays the action of "Skip," an adolescent boy who becomes a delivery boy for a drug ring, who pay him large amounts of money to drop off drugs. When his mother discovers that he is earning excessive amounts of money, she confronts him and forces him to tell the police about his work. Based on his confessions, the police are able to convict members of the drug ring. After the trial of the gang members, the judge tells him and his parents that it will be difficult to protect them from the gang. He responds to the judge's warning by stating, "I'll die for my country." As they leave the courtroom, he and his parents are shot by gang members and the story ends.

This story, as did many the male stories in Moss's study, portrays Skip primarily through the physical actions of serving as a delivery boy. There is little or no development of character traits or personal relationships in the story, particularly the mother and father. As in Mike's own life, the preference for physical activity represents an "autonomous" orientation. Moreover, as reflected by his final statement that "I'll die for my country," Skip adopts perceives actions in relatively absolutist terms. While the lack of complexity of character development could be attributed to its genre—a television/movie crime story, as Moss's analysis indicates, there are still possibilities for development

of complexities within a formulaic genre story by shifting between different characters' perspectives or by having one characters consider another character's perspective. Mike tells the story solely through Skip's eyes without considering the other characters' perspectives. One reason for this may have been his "autonomous" orientation which celebrates persons acting independently, a key theme pervading his own life.

Both of his responses to the stories are brief and unelaborated. In response to "I Go Along," he "really didn't get many impressions. The only one I really got was that Gene had a low self-image." He also predicts that Gene and Sharon will become "boyfriend and girlfriend." In response to "Fairy Tale," he recalls that his mother read him the story of Cinderella, which he associates with the story.

It is difficult to determine if his "autonomous" ""monologic"" orientation expressed in his interview comments is manifested in his sparse responses. The lack of development and elaboration that consistently characterizes his freewrites, story, and responses may reflect a larger preference for sports and work over aspects of literacy associated with school work. Or, as one of his teacher's noted, it may be that he does not want to expend the effort—that while he does a competent job, he does no more than is necessary.

Students With a "Dialogic" Orientation

The three remaining students' writing, stories, and responses represent a more "dialogic" orientation.

Adell. Adell is a highly articulate, successful student whose teacher describes as someone who likes to deal with ideas. She received as "A" grade in an Honors class; her teacher rated her attitude towards school as a "5." She reports reading 5 to 10 books in the past year for pleasure, including *My Name is Asher Lev*.

Much of Adell's "dialogic" orientation derives from her growing awareness of what she perceives to be the patriarchal attitudes of her father. She describes her family as:

> very traditional. It's me and my Mom doing the dishes after supper which me and my fixed. Dad will come home and expects that supper will be ready and that the table will be set. That's just how it is. My mom grew up in a farm family. It's something she grew up with.

She perceives her father as holding to outmoded gender attitudes. "I went out with someone last night. The first three questions my Dad asked me was, 'Does he hunt, does he fish, and will he walk you to the door and open it when you get there.' And, oh...jeez."

Adell distinguishes herself from her mother's attitudes. "I see the way my mom does things and I say that I'm not going to be like that. I want to be equal." She believes strongly in "respect and equality. I don't like anybody being put down because they are less equal." She attributes her interest in gender equality to her aunts whom she describes as "feminists." She describes one of them as "wild, she's crazy, yet's she every down to earth. She's every successful, yet she has her family. She works hard, yet she goes out and does fun things," conflicting descriptions reflecting a relatively high degree of cognitive complexity (Hynds, 1985).

She consistently stands back and describes the institutional forces shaping her experience. She perceives herself as part of "the system: it's so built into everybody I've seen that I don't know if I have much chance of getting out of it."

In describing her development, she states that she has learned "that there's two sides." For example, she expresses an interest in "low and psychiatry," and then steps back to note that "that's contradictory." Similarly, she consistently explores optional meanings of concepts. When asked if whether she perceived herself as popular, she draws a distinction between being "popular" and being "liked:" "I care to be liked. I don't need to be popular."

In discussing her feelings about school, she characteristically notes some contradictions. She is highly achievement orientation, consistently noting the value of hard work. At the same time, notes the limitations of "too much pressure and the competitiveness of the school. Here, it's obsessive. You've got to be the best in sports and the best in academics." She is also highly critical of various teaching practices, citing as an example the case of classes without assigned teacher in the New York City school system which are then "brought down to the auditorium to watch cartoons. I do not believe that this is right." As a student in one of those classes, "I would go to the library and use it for study hall." She then, in adopting an "ethics of caring," notes that "my parents would tell me this is wrong because I am not following rules. I believe that following rules shouldn't always be our prime goal."

Adell's story explores the relationship between a wealthy woman, Caroline, who schemes to start an affair with and a "working-class" carpenter, Paul, who is working at her home. Paul, a bachelor, has ambivalent feelings about Caroline's family because they represent a different class, yet he envies her sophistication that he finds lacking in his relationship with women. The woman, dissatisfied with her frequently absent husband, arranges for Paul to attend what is supposed to be a "party," yet she is the only one there. When she approaches him to begin an affair, although he finds her appealing, he asks that they remain "friends."

Adell acknowledges that she draw from soap operas, television, movies, and romance novels in constructing the story. However, in contrast to Mike's formulaic story, she explores some complexities associated with class differences and gender roles. Consistent with her interest in issues of "respect and equity," She portrays the characters as both products of their own respective classes, yet also as seeking to transcend class-bound definitions. And, consistent with her questioning of her father's (himself a construction worker) patriarchal values, she portrays Paul as sensitive, caring male who, at the end, settles for friendship rather than a sexual conquest.

In her response to "I Go Along," just as she is able to stand back and perceive herself as being socialized by her family, she locates Gene within an institutional context, perceiving him to be "locked into a system where he can't get out. If he is bright enough to be in their advanced class his chances of being moved up are slim." She also recognizes the potential arrogance inherent in Sharon's attempt to help Gene, noting that she could be perceived as having "too 'high and mighty' a reputation for her actual personality." She identifies with Sharon's efforts, as someone "who will look even at others when their friend is looking down or up." Rather than Kerry's scenario of having Sharon pull some strings to have him, Adell more realistically argues that, through "Sharon's words and and the poet's style as his inspiration," "Gene could find something that interests him and sets him apart from his goof-off class."

Similarly, she is one of the few students who stands back and critically examines the story, "Fairy Tale," perceiving it as "fakey." She describes the students as "very obvious—you immediately like Cynthia and Sam, and dislike Sherri and Ruth. It is also inevitable that Cynthia will become interested in Sam. It's so typical it's almost unlikable." At the same time, she adopt's Cynthia's perspective, exploring optional explanations of her motives: "I don't know if she did like Same or didn't want to betray him, (in a sense) by accepting "The One's" offer."

Adell is consistently constructing worlds only to stand back and reflect on the limitations of those worlds, perceiving them as "systems" to be deconstructed. Some of this many be due to her critical awareness of her patriarchal family structure as contrasted with other feminist role models, and the

ambiguity of her own relationship to those quite different family members. Thus, her own real-world experience shaped her writing and responding.

Dee. Dee is the daughter of deaf parents. As she notes in her interview, she often compensates for this in school by talking a lot. She frequently "loud and obnoxious" in classes, resulting in "discipline problems." She prefers to "go out a lot" to studying. She received a "C" grade in the course; her teacher rated her attitude towards school as a relatively low "2." Her most preferred leisure-time activity is "being with my friends." As she notes, " I believe in friends because where would we be without them; they keep us going." She has read fewer than five books for pleasure in the past year. She prefers "reading teen magazines or types of articles that involves what's going on in the world," as opposed to literature.

At the same time, she perceives a tension between the demands of the school and her loyalty to her peer group, a tension between silent obedience and expressive assertiveness. She describes her own identity in terms of her peer group allegiance: "all my friends are loud and outgoing so made me loud and outgoing." As she notes, "I like to be heard. I'm always talking and laughing and that's what most people know me for." This creates problems for her because "teachers get really pissed." Given the fact that she does "not have a good attitudes, I don't get good grades. So I just lay back and say forget it."

She further contrast the "boring" lecture approaches of her teachers to one of involvement and activity that would be "funner." Thus, the classroom is perceived as one of passivity as compared with the activity of experiences with her peers. She "likes school," not for academic reasons, but because "it's got a lot of people, it's fun."

Thus, a primary tension in Dee's life is that between her loyalty to peer associated with being "loud and obnoxious" versus the constraints of school and authority figures associated with inactivity and boredom.

Her story portrays this tension between loyalty and institutional constraints. A woman leaves a car to be repaired by an auto mechanic, John. The police then stop by to inquire about a missing stolen car. However, John does not tell them about the car. John then visits the women at her home to determine the woman's motives. He then discovers that the woman had borrowed the car from her boss and had scratched the car, something she did not want her boss to discover. John then agrees to fix the car and return it. John's willingness to help the woman reflects Dee's belief in the value of loyalty. And, his willingness to not tell the police about the car represents a commitment to loyalty, even at the expense of doing something illegal, a reflection of an institutional constraint.

The complexity in the story derives from John's difficulty in deciding on what to do about the car. He is portrayed as perplexed about the woman's motives and wanting to here her version. Moreover, in her version, she did not want her boss to know about the accident because she was seeking a job promotion. Thus, the story revolves around a web of complex motives.

Her sense of loyalty to peers, and the difficulty of maintaining those relationships is reflected in her story responses. In describing Gene's relationship with Sharon in "I Go Along," she notes that the story is about a "teenager's wishing they could have that one special person which in the story is Sharon Willis." She also notes the ways in which Gene's perspective shifts: "Gene thought that Sharon was kind of snobby but soon found out that she was a very nice person." And, she stands back and reflects on how Gene is thinking, noting that he "was very judgmental about a lot of things."

In response to "Fairy Tale," she raises a question as to "what was the purpose of even going to the dance?? To prove to them she could fit in?" She is also "confused me yet kept me interested" given Cynthia's decision to reject "The One." She proffers a different version in which Cynthia goes out with "The One," but "still remains friends with Sam."

In both her story and her responses, she focuses on the value and need for resolution of conflicts in friendships, reflecting a "connected" orientation. She therefore explores the complexities inherent in characters' competing social and interpersonal motives

John. Of the five students, John is perhaps the most dramatically embroiled in inner tensions and contradictions, in this case, the dilemmas associated with being a gay adolescent. He is therefore questioning many of the traditional gender attitudes around him: "I believe that in our culture the characteristics and qualitites of the all-American male are stupid." This leads him to the belief that 'just because of a man's sexual preference that he's a man or not." As is the case with Adell, his questioning of cultural norms, particularly adult authorities, leads him to focus on those characters who are also questioning authorities. In response to "Fairy Tale," he notes that "I feel sorry for Cynthia for the way she was mistreated by her family."

He is also concerned about the tensions created from the conflict between "not hurting others," and institutional taboos regarding gays. In response to interview questions regarding moral reasoning, John stressed the importance of caring for others, reflecting Gilligan's "ethics of caring." Consistent with Gilligan's research, he therefore entertained optional perspectives in his response to "Fairy Tale": "If I were Cynthia, I would have went after "The One." But then again maybe I would have made the same decision as Cynthia because "The One" is a very materialistic person who thinks what he have makes a person."

As Moss (1989) found in British adolescent female romance stories, John also noted the difficulty of attempting to be attractive and appealing to others out of fear of rejection and not compromising one's integrity and values. In the stories in Moss's study, this tension was frequently dramatized through the conflict between outward behaviors and inner thoughts—the females would appear outwardly flirtatious, but reflect inwardly on reasons for their behavior. And, he is coping with the tension between being gay and and emerging heterosexual relationship with a girl.

John is quite articulate and he has read between 5 to 10 books for pleasure during the past year. He received a "C+" grade in the course; his teacher rated his attitude towards school as a "4."

John's story portrays the development of an affair between John and Dave. As he notes in his interview, his story is autobiographical—he is John. The story plays out a number of tensions and contradictions in John's life. John is consistently worried about whether, on the one hand, Dave will find him attractive, but, on the other, he often doesn't understand his behavior. "John was so nervous. He hopes Dave was interested but he didn't think he was because he was two and a half years older."

John also experiences the tension between an attraction for his former girlfriend and his current gay relationship. When he sees her at a party, he notes that "she couldn't accept the fact that he was gay, because they used to go out." One of the reasons that John is able to have John switch to the girl's perspective may stem from his "ethics of caring" in Gilligan's sense—a propensity to empathy with the feelings of others, an orientation that runs throughout John's writing.

Throughout the story, John fears the fact that "if his mom knew what he was up to, she'd kill him and kick him out of the house." He portrays his to his parents' potential condemnation of his behavior as representing an absolutist, "monologic" orientation so different from his own inner tensions: When his former girlfriend tells his mother that he is gay, they are shocked. They confront him, accusing him of "an abomination against the Lord and it's wrong." In contrast to his parents' stance, he experiences an inner conflict: "it was tearing him apart. He loved God and his family and he also loved Dave." His sensitivity to others also creates the tension between caring about others' feelings and recognizing that others may be hurt by his actions. When he is forced by his parents to break off his relationship with Dave, John notes that "he had hurt his parents immensely, and now he had hurt Dave."

Throughout the story, John's perspectives shift from inner reflection about his actions to outward portrayal of behaviors and dialogue. While John portrays John's outward behavior, particularly the dialogue, in a relatively straightforward, often pedestrian manner, such seemingly calm surface manner belies the turmoil of his inner thoughts and feelings. In writing about "how others perceive me," he notes that "my friends perceive me as happy, fun, and even talkative. They see me as a confused person too. I don't know what I want or even how to get it."

John did not respond to "I Go Along" because he was absent from school In his response to "Fairy Tale," he, as do the other "dialogic" readers, entertain optional possibilities: "I would have gone after "The One." But then again maybe I would have made the same decision as Cynthia." In entertaining options, he is recognizing conflicting desires in his own life.

John is clearly grappling with difficult psychological and social problems. Yet he is able to use his writing and responses as a means of exploring the complexities associated with his problems.

Summary of Patterns

Figure 2 summarizes the attitudes, ethical orientation, and key thematic foci evident in their interview comments, writing, and responses for the five students.

Figure 2

Attitudes, Ethical Orientation, and Key

Thematic Foci for Each of Five Students

	School Attitude	Gender Attitude	Ethical Orientation	Key Thematic Foci
"monologic" orientations				
Kerry	"positive"	"traditional"	"autonomous"	"good" vs. evil" "positive" closure
Mike	"negative"	"traditional"	"autonomous"	"independence"
"dialogic" orientations				
Adell	"positive"	"non-traditional"	"connected"	limitations of "the system"/ patriarchy
Dee	"negative"	"non-traditional"	"connected"	self as "talk" vs. school
John	"positive"	"non-traditional"	"connected"	limitations of "macho"

While it is difficult to generalize across these students, certain patterns do emerge within and across the two groups.

Students adopting a "monologic" orientation. The two students adopting a "monologic" orientation, Kerry and Mike, should not be characterized as simple-minded or cognitively deficient. Both are relatively good students, earning B+ and A- grades respectively. In their stories and responses, both are constructing imagined, developed worlds. However, both seem to be stuck in relatively static, absolutist versions of reality, versions reflecting patriarchal attitudes that consistently shaped their story writing and responses. In both cases, they adopt an "autonomous" mode of moral reasoning, possibly limiting their willingness to imagine others persons' and/or characters' perspectives. (None of this should imply that adopting a patriarchal perspective forecloses awareness of tensions/contradictions; for an analysis of notable male authors' attempts to cope with patriarchal values, see Claridge and Langland, 1990).

In their interviews, both frequently responded to questions about their beliefs and values with the answers, "I don't know" or "I'm not sure," suggesting that they have not clearly formulated their attitudes or beliefs. And, in contrast to the students with "dialogic" orientations, neither student was questioning their family's and/or school's values. While Mike certainly "misbehaves" in class, both he and Kerry readily accepting institutional definitions of success.

Students adopting a "dialogic" orientation. The three students adopting a "dialogic" orientation, with the exception of Adell, are not outstanding students. And, in Dee's case, she was perceived to have a "negative" attitude towards school.

However, these students were more likely to adopt multiple perspectives both in their story writing and responses. They were willing to admit that they were puzzled by texts and frequently entertained optional explanations or interpretations. Both Adell and John were questioning their family's patriarchal values and Dee is questioning the teacher-centered mode of instruction that predominates in her classes, proposing alternative teaching methods. They are therefore standing outside of their "real-world" versions of reality, what Adell defined as "the system" to begin to construct alternative versions, however ill-defined. They all seem to be struggling with the development of what Belenky et al (1986) defined as "the subjective voice" through which they articulate their own emerging sense of self.

All three students adopted a "connected" "ethics of caring" stance of moral reasoning. In their stories and in their responses, all three developed and reacted to interpersonal relationships to a greater degree than did Kerry or Mike. These students consistently focused on the tensions between inner thoughts about others and others' actual reactions. And, as Moss (1989) found with her adolescents' romance stories, they dealt with the contradictions associated with attempting to be appealing and/or helpful to others without sacrificing one's integrity.

All three preferred leisure-time reading of literature to a greater degree than did the Kerry, who preferred nonfiction, and Mike, who was a non-reader. They may therefore have more practice in experiencing what Benton, Teasey, Bell, and Hurst (1988) define as the "evocation" of alternative worlds. Drawing on their previous reading experience, they were also more likely than the other students to engage in an intertextual linking that represented attempts to construct these alternative worlds. By recognizing that disparate texts may cohere around similar world views, they are beginning to recognize that narrative serves as a way of knowing. Thus, when Adell notes that "God is a written character in the imagination of ancient men who were finding a comfort in death and a simple life style," she is recognizing what Bahktin perceived as the ideological force associated with language use.

It was more likely the tensions and contradictions were played out in the stories then in their responses. This confirms Moss' (1989) argument that even formula fiction, as opposed to personal autobiography, serves as an medium by which adolescents play out the tensions and contradictions they experience in mass media/popular cultural. The students may not have developed their responses because they wrote only their initial reactions to the stories, which often resulted in only superficial

exploration of their experience. Had the students had more opportunity to explore their written responses over a period of time, they may have developed their responses to a greater extent. Further research involving the same subjects' conducting think-aloud responses should add useful insights to their responses processes.

Implications for teaching. The degree to which adolescents define and explore tensions and contradictions through their writing may therefore be a functions of the stance or perspective students bring to their writing. Teachers therefore need to employ activities that serve to foster a more "dialogic" stance.

For example, the students may have only been implicitly aware of the tensions/contradictions in their stories or responses. Students could reflect on the tensions/contradictions in their own writing, particularly the implied thematic inferences. As Patricia Donahue (1989) argues, reflecting on these themes involves what Barthes defined as inferring "obtuse" meanings as opposed to the thematic "symbolic" meaning. Inferring "obtuse" meaning uses the experience with the text to "challenge the universality of the symbolic meaning and to question common sense as seamless, inviolate truth" (75). Donahue finds that, for example, her students typically infer a "symbolic" meaning for "The Fall of the House of Usher" as meaning "madness leads to destruction and death; therefore, madness must be avoided at all costs." In order to infer the "obtuse" meanings of the story, students note the ways in which the character Roderick influences the narrator in perverse ways, serving to undermine the "symbolic" meaning that madness can be controlled.

Entertaining "obtuse" meanings therefore involves discovering the problematic aspects of previous thematic inferences. Rather then simply inferring that Gene should work hard and try to get into the honors class, students could explore some of the potential contradictions or complications associated with such a thematic inference. For example, some students may note that even though Gene may "try harder," he may lack the social skills associated in the school culture with appropriate behavior in an "honors" class.

Students may also reflect on the how they are socialized to infer those thematic inferences that confirm the prevailing attitudes of the school culture. As Morgan (1990) argues, schools themselves create their own "reading formations" consistent with the schools' own values and goals. In reflecting on why they inferred that Gene needs to "better himself" by becoming a member of the "honors" class, students may note that this inference puts the onus on Gene to change his status as opposed to failure of the system to recognize his abilities.

Conceiving of Gene's difficulties in terms of his own personal difficulties rather than in terms of institutional forces reflects a basic "reading formation" endemic to secondary literature instruction—the tendency to focus on the individual as an entity set apart from society. As Barnes and Barnes (1990) found in their analysis of literature instruction in British schools, the individual protagonist is often valued for resisting the need to conform to institutions as opposed to perceiving him as shaped by institutional forces. By helping students recognize that their ways of thinking are tied to institutional socialization, teachers may begin to encourage a more "dialogic" stance.

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